

## Impact of Life Skills among Adolescents: A Review

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**ABSTRACT:** *The end of 20 th century can be considered as both the best and worst time for adolescents. It provided maximum opportunities to grow independently. But at certain extend unimaginable developments of technologies diverted their capabilities to unfertile engagements. The psycho social factors of adolescents itself is a contributing factor to their misbehavior. Being the turningperiod of life this is the right time to take right decisions. In this condition like skills are those psycho social skills that enable individuals to cope effectively with their life challenges. This article draws how the life skills contribute to the individual development of adolescents.*

**Key Words:** *Life Skills, Adolescents, Impact*

### INTRODUCTION

The transition from being a child, dependent upon one's parents, to an independent and self reliant adult, that is the adolescent transition, represents one of the most dynamic, broad and influential periods of human development. The changes that occur during this period are sweeping, spanning biological, physical, psychological and behavioural domains of functioning. The breadth of these changes makes the period somewhat risky, given that problems in one domain may spill over and influence functioning in other domains. At the same time though, the transition may also represent an ideal time for interventions, largely for the same reason. Small alterations in one domain could have large cascading and potentially longterm effects across other domains.

As adolescents mature cognitively, their mental process becomes more analytical. They are now capable of abstract thinking, better articulation and of developing an independent thought process. These are truly the years of creativity, idealism, buoyancy and a spirit of adventure. But these are also the years of experimentation and risk taking, of giving in to negative peer pressure, of taking uninformed decisions on crucial issues, especially those relating to their bodies and their sexuality. Adolescence is thus a turning point in one's life, a period of increased potential and at the same time, one of greater vulnerability. Some key issues and concerns observed among adolescents include those relating to forming a self image, managing emotions, building relationships, strengthening social skills and dealing with or resisting peer pressure. Adolescents at this stage are more prone and vulnerable to high risk situations and may easily succumb to it. It has been seen that many adolescents are able to deal effectively with these challenges, while some struggle more than others. How well an adolescent deals with these issues is decided by a host of factors that include their personality, psychosocial support from the environment (that includes parents, teachers and peers) and the life skills that they possess.

According to WHO, Life skills refers to “abilities for adoptive and positive behaviour that enables an individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (Chaudhary and Mehta 2012).

According to UNICEF “Life skills” based education is important over numerical and literacy skills. Life skills area is not linked to the pedagogy of active learning (Leena et.al 2003) but also concerned with addressing the balance between knowledge, attitude and skills. (CBSE, 2013)

Life skills training/ education takes into account psychosocial competencies and inter personal competencies and inter personal skills that help students to take right decisions,solve problems think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

Life skills has been classified into three broad categories:

- **Thinking skills:** Thinking skills are skills that enhances the logical faculty of the brain using an analytical ability, thinking creatively and critically, and developing problem solving skills and improving decision making abilities.
- **Social skills:** Social skills include inter personal skills, communication skills, leadership skills, management skills, advocacy skills co operation and team building skills.

- Emotional skills: Emotional skills involves knowing and being comfortable with oneself. Thus self management, including managing/coping with

### **The ten core life skills laid down by the WHO are:**

**Self-awareness:** Includes recognition of self, our character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. Creating self-awareness can help adolescents recognize when they are under stress or feel pressured. Self-awareness is often a prerequisite to effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy with others.

**Empathy:** To have a successful relationship with our loved ones and society at large, it is important that we, during our adolescent years, learn to understand and care about other peoples' needs, desires and feelings. Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. Without empathy, the communication that adolescents have with others will not amount to a two-way process. When an adolescent is able to understand themselves, they will be better prepared to communicate and at the same time, they will be able to elicit support from others, and win their understanding. Empathy can help adolescents accept others who may be very different from them. This can improve their social interactions; not just in peer group interactions in classroom settings but also later in life, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity.

**Critical thinking** is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute by helping the adolescent to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behaviour, such as values, peer pressure and the media.

**Creative thinking** is a novel way of seeing or doing things that is characteristic of four components – fluency (generating new ideas), flexibility (shifting perspective easily), originality (conceiving of something new), and elaboration (building on other ideas).

**Decision making** is a skill that can help an adolescent deal constructively with decisions about their lives. Young adults can learn to assess the different options available to them, and consider what effects these different decisions are likely to have.

**Problem solving** helps in empowering the adolescent to look at a problem objectively vis-à-vis the different options for solutions and would help them come to a solution after weighing the pros and cons of the different options available.

**Interpersonal relationship skills** help the adolescents relate in positive ways with people they interact with in their everyday lives. This may entail being able to make and keep friendly relationships (which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being); maintaining good relations with family members (which are an important source of social support) and also being able to end relationships constructively.

**Effective communication** means helping the adolescents express themselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions, desires, needs and fears and also includes the ability of being able to ask for advice and help in a time of need.

**Coping with stress** as a life skill means recognizing the sources of stress in their lives, recognizing how this affects them, and acting in ways that help them control their levels of stress; learning positive coping styles and replacing passive with active coping mechanisms - this may include changing their environment or lifestyle, and learning how to relax.

**Coping with emotions** includes recognizing emotions within themselves and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour, and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. A important aspect of this skill is learning to manage intense emotions like anger or sadness that can have negative effects on our health if we do not respond appropriately.

### **Review of Literature**

According to Albertyn et al. (2004) life skills training enhance critical thinking abilities, which further impacts on living life actively, being responsible in the job and in future planning too.

Ramesh and Farshad C. (2004) in his study proved the effectiveness of life skills training in increasing mental and physical health, pro-social behavior and decreasing in behavioral, social problems & self-destructive behaviors.

Smith & et al., (2004) noted significant improvement in interpersonal relationship and reduction in aggression and behavioural problems.

Tuttle et al., (2006), during their investigation, add the life skills to students' curriculum. The results of this study suggested the extraordinary capability of teens to positive promotion and flexibility.

Vranda and Rao (2011) proved that life skills training enhanced their psychosocial competencies.

Puspakumarag (2013) in his study showed that life skills training was effective in preventing a wide range of problems such as substance abuse, teenage pregnancies, violence Bullying & to promote self-confidence and self-esteem among the adolescents.

Roodbari, Sahdipoor, and Ghale (2013) in their research showed that life skills training has a positive effect and improves social development, emotional and social adjustment, suggesting an increase in compatibility of children and public health.

Life skill education is found to be empowering adolescents from economically backward sections of society also. (Sangeeta and Bhamini 2012).

Life skill education programs have been adopted to target several objectives among one of the most vulnerable groups in India. The objective include to promote awareness of the world around them, create awareness on growing issues, enhance mobility, empower to express their opinions as well as promotion of an egalitarian participation in decisions that affect their lives, developing vocational skills and saving mentality in them.

A positive and net effect is observed in the study on impact of the life skills based approach namely in the attitude of adolescent girls. (Rajib Acharya et al.2009)

### Discussion and Conclusion

A relevant and proper implementation of life skill education is a need of an hour, for today's society. Imparting life skill education to the students, can be helpful as it specifically addresses the needs of children, helps in motivating providing practical, cognitive, emotional social and self management skills for life adjustments. Yadav P. Iqbal(2009) showed positive results of imparting life skills education to students and bringing the change in adolescents attitude, thought and behaviour by providing supporting environment to them.

According to Errecart et al.,(1991) and Caplan et al.,(1992) life skill education proves to be an effective approach in primary prevention education, as its more interactive, uses problem solving approach and its activities based. Hence, teacher and the taught both involves in Learning and fun too. On the whole, life skills education, have found to be an effective psychosocial intervention strategy for promoting positive social and mental health of adolescents which play an important role in all aspects such as strengthening coping strategies and developing self confidence and emotional intelligence as well as enhancing critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills.

Thus, there is, significance and importance of life skills education to be integrated into the regular school curriculum and given on a daily basis by a life skill trainer/ teacher/ counselor to enhance the mental health of students, equip them with better adapted skills to face the challenges of changing life situations and empower them to become fully functioning contributors to the host society in particular and the world in general.

In the light of above discussion, it could be concluded that life skill education has its importance and significance in overall development of students. Our findings are in common to the findings of Botvin, et al.,(1998) ,Nair, M.K.C, (2005) many more, suggesting life skill education program as a good supportive system for adolescents.

### FUTURE IMPLICATIONS:

Although considerable progress has been made in the past decade and in the present too, that life skill education is an effective mode of education, which does enhances social, emotional and thinking skills and help the 21<sup>st</sup> century youngsters to achieve their goals, by strengthening their abilities to meet the needs and demands of the present society and be successful in life. But still further empirical research is needed from future researchers, academicians and professionals in the related field to demonstrate robust findings.

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